

**Objectives:**

1. Students will learn how to utilize and gather information using the Nebraska Access Website.
2. Students will learn about the Caldecott Medal and its criteria for awarding a single book annually with this prestigious award.
3. Students will compare and contrast various art forms from different book winners from the last 60 years. Using graphic organizers, (teachers choice), they will organize the outstanding criteria used to award the illustrated book.

**Standards Addressed:***AASL*

- 1.2.3 Learners will demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats.
- 2.1.2 Learners will organize knowledge so that it is useful.

*NE L.E.A.R.N.S. Standards*

- 4.1.4 By the end of the fourth grade, students will identify the resource appropriate for a specific purpose, and use the resource to locate information.

*Lincoln Public Schools Curriculum Standards Grade 3:* Know the Language Art -- Use the Elements and Principles. Students should:

- Know the elements by name: line, shape, texture, value, color, space.
- Be able to identify the elements in their own works of art and the works of others.

*Lincoln Public Schools Curriculum Standards Grade 4:* Comprehension Skills: The student applies literal, inferential and critical thinking to construct meaning.

- Literal: Uses information on the page to recall, remember or identify.
  - Story Structure
    - Identifies character, setting and plot.
    - Maps the plot of a story.
    - Differentiates between major and minor story elements.
    - Finds details that help visualize events.

*The Big6<sup>TM</sup> Skills 3:* Location and Access

- Locate sources (intellectually and physically)
- Find information within sources

**Materials Needed/Teacher Preparation:**

- Select one Caldecott Medal book for each student
- Question and inquiry about your book:
  - Title of Book:
  - Author:

- Illustrator:
- Year Published:
- What artistic styles or images from the book are most appealing to you?

## Procedures/Activities:

Go to NebraskaAccess (<http://nebraskaccess.ne.gov>). Click on “Databases Available to Nebraskans.” Click on “Books in Print.” Select the “Browse by Award” option. Click on the letter “C” to jump down the page to where awards beginning with “C” are listed. Click on “Caldecott Medal” to access a list of titles that have been awarded the Caldecott Medal. After scanning the total list, teachers can narrow the winning list to match one book per student. Caldecott Award winners may be either chosen randomly, or as personal favorites. I combined the two methods to bring in a wider range that covers a larger amount of time periods. Teachers will select one Caldecott Book for each student.

2008: **The Invention of Hugo Cabret** by Brian Selznick  
 2000: **Joseph Had a Little Overcoat** Simms Taback (Viking)  
 1994: **Grandfather's Journey** by Allen Say  
 1986: **The Polar Express** by Chris Van Allsburg (Houghton)  
 1980: **Ox-Cart Man** by Barbara Cooney  
 1970: **Sylvester and the Magic Pebble** by William Steig (Windmill Books)  
 1960: **Nine Days to Christmas**, illustrated by Marie Hall Ets; text: Marie Hall Ets and Aurora Labastida (Viking)  
 1963: **The Snowy Day** by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking)  
 1954: **Madeline's Rescue** by Ludwig Bemelmans (Viking)  
 1943: **The Little House** by Virginia Lee Burton (Houghton)  
 1940: **Abraham Lincoln** by Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire (Doubleday)

## Begin by introducing what a Caldecott Medal is and its history.

In 1937, Rene Paul Chambellan designed the Caldecott Medal. It is named for Randolph Caldecott who was one of a group of three influential children's book illustrators out of England in the nineteenth Century. People believed his illustrations to be outstanding in their ability to, in the period of history, to capture humor, create a sense of movement and other criteria meant to accompany and compliment the text.

**Today**, we would need to emphasize the very wide array of styles and time periods captured in today's illustrated books.

The Caldecott Medal “shall be awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American Picture Book for Children published in the United States during the preceding year. The award shall go the artist, who must be a citizen or resident of the United States, whether or not he is the author of the text. Members of the Newberry Medal Committee will serve as judges.”

Students will be taught to search the “**Books in Print**” database through NebraskaAccess. Students will be able to browse both in fiction and nonfiction by subject, author and award. Any book you need any information on will be found at this wonderful site.

## Anticipatory Set:

Hold up two magnificently illustrated children's books published in the same year. One will be a Caldecott Medal winner; the other will not be one (Book A & B). A form will be distributed: “If you had to choose a book by only viewing a couple of pages, which one will you check out?” Collect, tally and

talk about the book chosen by the majority of the class. (Or all their choices!). Introduce the Caldecott Medal Award book of the two, to generate interest and questions from students.

1. Why did you pick book A. or Book B.?

Here's a wonderful yet simple art interpretation introductory opportunity for the picturesque language by Chris Van Allsburg, **The Polar Express**.

**"On Christmas Eve, many years ago, I lay quietly in my bed. I did not rustle the sheets. I breathed slowly and silently. I was listening for a sound -- a sound a friend had told me I'd never hear -- the ringing bells of Santa's sleigh."**

-The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg

#### **Questions asked:**

1. List one database you were able to locate from NebraskaAccess, which helped you learn about the Caldecott Award.
2. A picture book for children is one that hopefully and most importantly, provides a child with a unique visual experience with both artistry in pictures and words. Which book comes to mind that fulfills these important elements? (Explain **fulfills** and **elements** definition).

#### **Questions to ask about the artistic style of the book:**

1. What medium did the illustrator use?
2. Are the colors selected more pastel and quiet, or bold and bright?
3. What colors does the illustrator seem to prefer?
4. Do you think that the illustrations match well with the story? What would you change?
5. Which illustration is your favorite in the story? Why?

Use an Opaque projector or an Elmo, to clearly display what the Caldecott Medal looks like. If a new Caldecott Medal could be designed, what would it look like?

Write a **caption** (define) of your interpretation of the symbol on the Caldecott Medal.

Print off a list of Caldecott Award winning books. **Laminate the list** and place in a binder for students' use.

**Step-by-Step Procedures** for a Caldecott Medal Award Book Lesson: This lesson combines references to Art **and** Language Arts objectives from the Lincoln Public Schools Curriculum Standards.

This lesson would best be put together as a "bound homemade book," individually created for each student. At the completion of all the components, the pages could be laminated for long-lasting effects. It would serve as a wonderful collection of an individual student's keen observations and interpretation of text at this third and fourth grade level.

The first step is to spark great interest in the book by learning as much as possible about the author and illustrator of books selected. Research has lent much information about our most popular children's book creators and young students can relate to the author/illustrator with more enthusiasm, than just simply saying, "Today I'm going to read *The Polar Express*, by Chris VanAllsburg." Without the background or facts about this artist from a child's perspective, meaning won't transfer nearly as coherently.

**Introduce** "tid-bits" about the illustrator/author of books selected:

- Did you know that Chris VanAllsburg found board games "disappointing?"
- Lynd Ward, author and illustrator of *The Biggest Bear* (1952) realized his last name spelled backwards was, "draw."
- Barbara Cooney, author and illustrator of *Chanticleer the Fox* and, and illustrator of *The Ox-Cart Man*, was allowed to use and play with all of her mother's paints and brushes any time she wanted, as long as she cleaned up!
- Ezra Jack Keats, author of the *Snowy Day*, grew up in a rough and tough neighborhood. Some bullies came and demanded he give them the picture he had been drawing. It was greatly admired and handed back to him!

This article was found via NebraskaAccess, utilizing the Wilson OmniFile database. Hegal,C. (2007). Inciting interest in the Caldecott award books. *Library Media Connection*, 25(7), 14-15. *Newbery and Caldecott Trivia and More for Every Day of the Year*, by Claudette Hegel (Libraries Unlimited, 2000). ISBN: 1563088304

Students will now create a "bio-sketch" of themselves to introduce readers of their interests, style and ideas, that spurred them to become an Illustrator of a children's book!

**Your Artistic Name:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Book that influenced you the most in its artistic style:**

**Title:**

**Year Published:**

**Author:**

**Illustrator:**

**The number one reason that you are an illustrator today:**

**What criteria do you see as number one for a picture book to receive the Caldecott Medal?**

- a. Illustrations alone
- b. Text matching illustrations
- c. Illustrations matching text
- d. Artistic style

- Students will nominate a book from the library that they believe possesses the *characteristics* of a Caldecott Award-winning book.

**Write three excellent elements/qualities a Caldecott winner has.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Students will choose a favorite text page from the book and re-create an illustration with the author's decided median used. Their own interpretation of the words meaning, from given page, is the *focus* of their drawing.

**With said number of Caldecott winners (one per-student), which three books would you omit from the list?**

**Criteria used to omit:**

- a. Illustrations alone,
- b. Text matching illustrations,
- c. Illustrations matching text,
- d. Artistic style

Discussion following the shared class list. (Students will first share the book they newly nominated, and the three books they chose to omit.)

- Use an Opaque projector or an Elmo, to clearly display what the Caldecott Medal looks like. If a new Caldecott Medal could be designed, what would it look like?
- Write a **caption** (define) of your interpretation of the symbol on the Caldecott Medal.

**Adaptations:**

Students with a reading and/or writing IEP may receive a Caldecott Medal title that is matched well with their reading ability. Questions may be recorded by a teacher or support staff for the individual student.

**Formative Assessment:**

An ongoing informal check for understanding of this lesson will include a student's ability to access the NebraskaAccess site and research the given sites there to gather information about this project/lesson. Steps to locate the required information will be fully visible and accessible to all. Checking to make sure that the lesson plan steps have been completed with student's own writing and drawing samples included.

**Summative Assessment:**

A multiple choice or matching test may be given, after class presentations, with illustrator's names, titles of books, artistic styles, artist's trivia, and any pertinent information about the history of a Caldecott Award.

An "**Art History**" type of assessment could be very telling, where an illustration from a particular book is shown class-wide, and followed are questions about its style, or simply its origin could be assessed.

- Describe in words the artistic style, materials used, light, colors applied by the artist of the Caldecott Medal Book.

**Artistic summative assessment:** Replicate a style of both illustration and text that would best fit, in your view, into the given story. Do not change the setting, characters or the illustrator's style.

**Notes:** I came across a great site from Instructor Magazine. "Listen to Author Podcasts."  
<http://www.learnoutloud.com/>

Citings:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/>